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THREE GALLEASSES FOR THE QUEEN OF SCOTLAND

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WHAT do we know of the events surrounding the coming of Marie de Guise Lorraine to Scotland? Less perhaps than we think, particularly if we rely on the chroniclers and writers of patriotic accounts designed to boost the importance of Scotland and the glory of the event. A century after the event, William Drummond of Hawthornden wrote:

The Abbot of *Arbroth*, and the Lord *Maxwell* by many enterchanged letters full of Princely Love, had assured the King and the Lady Mary of Lorrain, and Articles being agreed upon, to the great content of the French, they were espoused by Proctors, as is the custome amongst Princes, with great triumph in the City of Paris, in the presence of the French King and many Peers; after which solemnity Monsieur d'*Annanbault* Admiral of *France*, accompanied her to New haven in the beginning of the Moneth of June 1538 where she embarqued and with many *French* Ships, when she had been tost on the Seas came to Fyffeness where at Cayrel she was attended by the Noblemen and the King, who consummated the mariage in the Cathedral Church of *St Andrews* in July.¹

In the *Diurnal of Occurrents* the author says:

Upon the xvij day of [blank] the yeir of god mcv xxxviiij the lord Maxwell past ambassatour to france for treating of marriage with the duke of Loraneis dauchtere quhome he brocht to Scotland on trinitie sonday and landit at Sanctandrois and thair the kingis grace and the said Marie were spousit .²

John Lesley says James 'sent in France to the earl of Murray and Master David Beaton, abbot of Arbroath *then new made cardinal*, ambassadors then resident.' He goes on to say that at the beginning of May the king sent Lord Maxwell and Glencairn and that the proxy

¹ William Drummond of Hawthornden, *History of Scotland from 1423–1542* (London: printed by Henry Hills for Richard Tomlins and himself 1655), p. 209.

² A. G. Scott, *A Diurnal of Remarkable Occurrents that have Passed within the Country of Scotland since the Death of James IV ...*, vol. 1 (Glasgow: Maitland Club, 1833), p. 22.

marriage took place in Paris in the presence of the king.³ Patrick Fraser Tytler in *Lives of the Scottish Worthies* speaks of the embassy of Cardinal Beaton, Lord Maxwell and the master of Glencairn.⁴ In describing the festivities on her arrival in Scotland he includes verses of David Lindsay about a tournament at St Andrews ‘on Whitsun Monday in presence of the king and queen’ which in 1538 would be 10 June.

George Buchanan says only that she arrived at Balcomie on 12 June.⁵ Robert Lindsay speaks of James sending a navy of ships and Lord Maxwell to see the queen married and that he shipped the queen to Scotland.⁶ Agnes Strickland In her *Lives of the Queens of Scotland*, vol. 1 pp. 325–9 says that the lord treasurer paid 40 crowns for the officers and minstrels on the day of the Queen’s marriage at Chateaudun but then says that everyone knows she was married at Notre Dame in presence of the French king. She thinks that Maxwell organised the crossing from Dieppe and that she arrived on ‘Trinity Sunday 12 June.’

Rosalind Marshall says that the contract was signed at Lyons at the end of March and in April ‘a large contingent of Scots arrived at Chateaudun for the betrothal ceremony and that on 9 May it was Lord Maxwell who put the ring on Mary’s finger. On 10 June she sailed from Le Havre and arrived at Balcomie castle in Fife on Trinity Sunday.’⁷ Gordon Donaldson says more cautiously that the contract was prepared in January, that the marriage took place by proxy on 18 May and she landed at Crail probably on June 10th.⁸

Most short encyclopedia entries on Mary say that she was married on 18 May 1538 in the cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris by proxy to

³ John Lesley, *History of Scotland from the Death of King James I in the Year MDCCCXXXVI to the Year MDLXI* (Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1830), p. 155.

⁴ Patrick Fraser Tytler, *Lives of the Scottish Worthies* (London: John Murray, 1838), vol. III, pp. 256–7.

⁵ George Buchanan, *History of Scotland* (in the translation by James Aikman, London: Blackie, 1827), vol. 2, p. 317.

⁶ Robert Lindsay of Pittscottie’s *History of Scotland from 21 February 1436–1565* (Edinburgh: Baskett and co, 1728 ed.), pp. 160ff.

⁷ Rosalind Marshall, *Scottish Queens* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell, 2003), p. 114.

⁸ Gordon Donaldson, *Scotland James V to James VII*, Edinburgh History of Scotland, vol. III (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1978), p. 49.

James V of Scotland, lord Maxwell acting as the king's proxy in the French king's presence.

Some of the dates suggested must be wrong. Easter in 1538 was 21 April; Whitsunday was June 9 and Trinity June 16. The 12th of June was a Wednesday. Other statements are inaccurate. Beaton was not made a cardinal until 20 December 1538 for instance. 'Newhaven' is misleading. Le Havre was Francis's new depot on the Atlantic for his Navy as he did not want to use Dieppe, which was more exposed, and so Newhaven is an obvious but erroneous translation. Yet others are doubtful. Francis was at Moulins for most of the time and went to Lyon (where the marriage contract was signed in March⁹) and on to Nice. The outfitting of the galleasses to carry her to Scotland clearly began immediately the contract was signed, if not earlier. Was there any chance that Francis went back to Paris for the proxy marriage? As Francis was at the meeting negotiated by the pope with the emperor at Nice from 15 May to 20 June when he was at Villeneuve,¹⁰ it is unlikely he had returned to Paris for the 9th and for the 18th if he was near Nice, presumably impossible.

Where David Beaton was is less clear although as he was in France as resident ambassador he was probably with Francis. Maxwell was on the borders in late February when a day of truce was being organised and so may have been sent to France with other Scots in March or April.

Was it done on 9 May or the 18th? Was she then accompanied by Claude d'Annebault the Admiral of France? As he was not appointed Admiral until 1543 and in 1538 had just been appointed a Marshal of France to attend on Francis in his meetings with the Emperor this too seems unlikely. One can only conclude that the Scottish accounts were designed to augment the importance of the event and of the Scots for domestic consumption. The marriage, though important, was not foremost in Francis's priorities.

Details available in an account book in the French archives make some things more probable if more prosaic. After the proxy marriage, whether at Chateaudun or Paris, Marie immediately set off for

⁹ This is in Archives Nationales de France, (CARAN), Trésor des Chartes J680r78.

¹⁰ Robert Knecht, *Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 287–291.

Scotland. It is not clear who escorted her on the first stage of her trip but from Rouen she was conducted by Jacques de Fontaine who was to be her escort for the journey from Rouen by ship to Le Havre, which she reached by the 20 May. Given the time needed this makes 18th May a less likely date, if not wholly impossible. At Le Havre after a muster and review they set off on ships—galleasses—provided by Francis I. These were the same three galleasses that had been provided for Madeleine. Marie was on *La Realle* the rest of her train on the lesser galleasses. What can we say about the time it would take in a sailing ship to travel from Le Havre to Leith—approximately 550 nautical miles? At a speed of 4 knots, which would require constant favourable winds, the trip could be done in 6 days. At an average speed of 2 knots (more likely) it would take twelve. In difficult conditions it could take longer. At any rate, between May 20 and around June 10 to 16 she had survived the perilous journey to Scotland and arrived at Crail, the ships evidently preferring not to run up to Leith. Indeed, they probably disembarked Marie and her train and immediately set back out to sea as they had been victualled for an extended tour since Francis I wanted them in the Mediterranean as soon as possible to reinforce his military activities there. The ships were back in France by 20 June. This suggests an earlier rather than a later arrival in Scotland. Then as the truce had been negotiated with the emperor, the ships no longer needed to go on to the Mediterranean and the mariners were discharged.

By good fortune we are able to see some of the massive enterprise that lay behind this apparently simple and uneventful journey. It was the privilege and responsibility of the French king to provide the transport, and a costly business it was. In the French National Archives a draft version survives of the accounts of this journey prepared for auditing in 1541 and presented by M Palamydes Gontier, who had been appointed the treasurer of the French Atlantic navy (the *marin de Ponant*) in 1537.¹¹ The reason for this survival may

¹¹ This was first discussed in Augustin Jal (ed.), *Documents inédits sur l'histoire de la marine au XVIe* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1842). In this Jal gathers and comments extensively on three sixteenth century accounts of matters relating to French Atlantic and Mediterranean galleys in the sixteenth century. These books then in the Bibliothèque Royale, now in the National Archives at Paris include the expenses of the refurbishment of the galleasses and the galley *L'Arbelastière* for Mary's journey. (CARAN Marine KK 9469–3) The original has

well be the financial scandals that had resulted in the previous treasurer, Jehan de Vymont, being suspended until he had rendered a satisfactory account of his administration. His temporary replacement, Gontier, had too limited a power to authorise the further payments.

As a result, in April Jacques De Fontaine had gone on a twenty-one day round journey to Francis I who was in Provence, to get authorisation for the mounting costs of the refit that had to come from the treasury of l'Epargne. And on 1st May 1538 Francis had appointed Charles de Mouy, seigneur de la Milleraye, vice admiral, and Claude de Montmorency, seigneur de Fosseulx, one of his Masters of the Household to oversee these expenses. Even so, Michel Chapuys had to make another forced journey on 13 May to the king, which is noted as 72 *postes* (standard stages of four *lieus*), which suggests that he was considerably further away than Paris.¹² Most of the bills for expenditure seem to have been authorised between the 23/24 April, (immediately after Easter) and the 18 May when the Queen's arrival must have been imminent. The account shows much of the ordinary drudgery of matching warrants to entries, goods ordered to goods delivered, the querying of suspicious records, missing vouchers double entries, disallowing claims and the general search for fraudulent practice.¹³

It is enlightening to examine what the account tells us about the state of royal naval ships at the time and the conditions in which queens might be conveyed across the seas. The account details the numbers and sometimes names of the various specialists and labourers engaged at different stages of the refitting, providing a comprehensive picture of the process. A rough count shows that five to six hundred workers were involved and that supplies were obtained from half a hundred merchants. It does not, however, provide a complete description of the vessels as it is concerned only

considerably more information than Jal's printed summary. The details of Vymont's suspension and Gontier's appointment are included in the account. Augustin Jal was the doyen of marine historians in the mid nineteenth century and his dictionary of French marine terms is still the normal source for information about obscure terms.

¹² A standard poste was 4 lieues which is roughly 16 kilometres.

¹³ For example, the cost of parchment was disallowed and the cost of writing 236 leaves of parchment. The account was not allowed until after 9 October 1546.

with matters involving expenditure. There is thus no reference to the rudder or tiller and little information about oars, which would have been stored separately in the oar pool.

Three galleasses and the galley *L'Arbelestière* were to be provided; the same three galleasses in which Jacques de Fontaine, seigneur de Mormoulins, the lieutenant general had conducted Francis's daughter Madeleine to Scotland in the previous year—*La Realle*, the *Saint Jehan* and the *St Pierre*. *La Realle* was substantially larger than the other two, the *Saint Jehan* slightly larger than the *St Pierre*. The *la Realle* was probably about 200 'pieds' in length although this can only be argued indirectly. They were under the general supervisor of Christopher de Cestremanville, the *capitaine de navires*; Robert de Mahiel seigneur de Bonnebault was captain of the galley, *Arbalestière*, Michel Chappuys was the superior captain of *La Realle* with below him Jehan de Clamorge, seigneur de Sennies. Baptiste Auxilia was captain of the *St Pierre* and Jehan d'Orgenne of the *St Jehan*.

Why choose galleys or galleasses? The French still frequently used galleys for expeditions against the English, often with some success.¹⁴ They were part of the attack on Henry VIII's fleet in 1545 when the *Mary Rose* went down and French accounts always claimed that it was a shot from a French galley that did the damage. When Nicholas Durand Villegagnon, knight of Malta went in 1548 to take Mary Queen of Scots to France he chose to take galleys and was able to return by the west coast and Ireland. In some circumstances, galleys could row past bigger and more heavily armed sailing ships with impunity.¹⁵ The reasons for selecting the galleass for these earlier journeys, however, undoubtedly came down to the tricky nature of the coasts, wind and tide on the way to the Firth of Forth that could pose problems for sailing ships and the need to discourage attacks from the pirates and privateers who infested the North Sea.¹⁶

¹⁴ Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fonds Français 15641 especially f. 90.

¹⁵ For a fuller discussion of the use of galleys see my 'Not with a Bang but with a Whimper: the End of the French Corps de Gallées', in Michael Adcock, Emily Chester and Jeremy Whitemand (eds), *Revolution, Society and the Politics of Memory: the Proceedings of the Tenth George Rudé Seminar on French History and Civilisation* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1996), pp. 29–40.

¹⁶ This was the attitude of the English navy as well. When Somerset was in Scotland in 1547 of the 23 vessels he had with him six were 20 ton rowboats and

The galleass was described at the time as a *forte galère* and it was designed to combine the advantages of the oared galley with those of the armed sailing ship. The galley's desirable manoeuvrability was offset by its relatively low freeboard and the fact that its guns were confined to the prow, making it vulnerable to a broadside. The galleass had a deck of broadside guns, usually above the rowers but occasionally below. The disadvantage was that the additional weight made the oars useable only for short manoeuvres. Although the French, despite the closure of the *clos des galées* at Rouen at the end of the fifteenth century, routinely kept galleys at Brest and certain other ports like Le Havre the galleass was evidently seen as safer for the Northern waters and preferable to ships wholly dependent on sail.

The process of preparing the ships had been started well before the wedding. The galleasses were out of commission having been stored in the sunken wet docks (or *souille*) that is trenches full of water, which was the routine way of preserving them between periods of employment. The work was taking place at Le Havre de Grace. Francis I was developing this as a naval base but it is clear that its resources were overtaxed and small and medium-sized boats were going backwards and forwards to Honfleur on the other side of the Seine estuary and along the coast to the more distant Dieppe for a month or more to bring in men and equipment.

When the galleasses were decommissioned, their fittings had been removed and stored in a number of cellars and lumber-rooms as well as a house on the quay at Honfleur and these had to be recovered. First, however, the galleasses had to be extracted from their watery homes and since they were evidently not on the sort of cradle that later made the process easier this took time. In 1538 considerable leverage was necessary, provided in the case of *La Realle* and the *Saint Jehan* by the labours of a number of small boats and sturdy mariners and in the case of the *St Pierre* the assistance of the Galion called *le Daulphin*. The vessels were then run up onto the beach and held upright by scaffolding, so the work of caulking them could take place. In each case one of the major expenses was the cost of pioneers digging between the tides to keep the sand from encroaching (76 tides for *La Realle*, and 242 for the *St Pierre*, which suggests for the *St Pierre* work over a period of nearly three months).

'Weatherly galleasses' predominated in the rest. Tom Glasgow Jnr, 'The Navy in Philip and Mary's War 1557-8', *Mariner's Mirror* 53 (1967), p. 328.

This was to enable the carpenters and caulkers to get at the keel and lower planking. The workers had to be ferried out to the ships. For *La Realle* this went on over a twelve-day period and longer for the others.

The accounts show the purchase of endless amounts of resin and pitch and oakum nails of a wide variety of shapes and weights as well as two headed nails. Candles were provided for those working under the decks where the cabins and other structures had been dismantled for the work. The whole of their bottoms sides, decks, boards and ‘plabordes’ had to be scoured and the flaps of leather over the scuppers renewed. The surface was evidently burned clean with bundles of straw used for a controlled burn. Several hundred days labour put in by dozens of carpenter/caulkers went into *La Realle* alone. The sawyers worked for twenty-one days to cut timber to the size and shape required by the carpenters.

La Realle seems to have been in better shape than the others and the *St Pierre* seems to have needed what amounted to a rebuild. Amongst the pieces needing renewing were the heavy timbers (requiring squared wood) the knees, the *vareigne* and ‘false’ *vareigne* that shaped the shell of the ship. During the fitting of these pieces other wood was needed ‘a retenir le clotaige’. The ballast had to be removed and replaced—and carefully distributed so that the vessel would float easily (whole treatises were later devoted to this issue). The castle had to be made anew. Plasterwork had to be renewed. Finally the decks had to be floored and the cabins reassembled. These activities required joiners as well as carpenters. Most of the material including nails and ironwork for these activities came from ‘la grant nef françoise’, evidently a sort of cannibalism. A good deal of new cordage to make both fixed rigging (stays) and running rigging was required plus the grease and tallow to preserve them and make them supple as well as pulleys, *chapettes* (hooked pulleys) and thread to fasten the ends of the ropes.

The accounts mention the poop, the pontes (the bridge) the castle (and forward castle). Each galleass had seven cabins under the decks and an area described as *soubstes*—evidently the space left below the cabins and above the keel that may have had additional cabins or the benches for the rowers. There were cabins in the castles, which were panelled. There were two masts, a main mast and a forward mast and their yards both of which supported a mainsail and a topsail but no evidence of a third. The term *mastereau*, (or *masterel*) associated with the forward mast probably in this case refers to the spar at the bows, rather than the mizzen mast, since there is reference

to demounting and remounting it. The great mast was evidently fixed as there are payments for the *estambray* of the great mast, the arrangement to strengthen and hold the mast around the hole in the deck through which it passed. There is no similar reference to the forward mast, which might therefore have been demountable although that seems unlikely. Both masts had *hunes* that is the platform at the top of the lower part of the mast used to spread the cordage again for the upper part. The sails had *oeil de boeufs* to help the hoisting and lowering and there were six double pulleys for the mainsail on the mainmast but nothing to indicate whether these were square or lateen sails. The galleasses were also equipped with various *appareils*—devices for assisting the manual strength of the sailors, presumably one for the rudder and another for the anchor. There were levers, presumably winches, with wheels (for the anchor chain) and other wheels for ‘la grand escoutte’ of the *St Pierre*. There were also the *chevilles*, pins or pegs, wooden or metal used in a variety of circumstances, in one case altered so that the sailors could raise and lower the topsail on the forward mast more easily. Each galleass had small boats with oars aboard.

Were there oars suitable to propel the galleass itself? Jal argues at length that these galleass were like the Genoese galleass of the late fourteenth century that could and did from time to time dispense with oars.¹⁷ Certainly the only mention of oars is for thirty new oars supplied for ‘la grant basteau de la dit galleass *La Realle* at a cost of 6–6 and a blurred entry which seems to read ‘une certain prins avirons’ at 9–0 ‘por servir a ce que dessus’ which might mean the oarsmen, although we are given no clues about the existence of benches for the oarsmen.

Critical to the safety of the voyage would be the artillery carried. These sat on carriages that had wheels and a limited means of sighting and raising the muzzles. The gun carriages were supplied with hooks and chains to help move them about and also to hold them in place. The guns carried included bastard culverins that probably fired a 17 lb shot.¹⁸ There were both iron and cast guns, presumably at this date, bronze. Mention of the ‘ferrure’ of the medium artillery suggests that some of them may have had trunnions

¹⁷ Jal, *Documents inédits*, pp. 16–8.

¹⁸ Jeff Kinard, *Artillery: an Illustrated History of its Impact* (Sydney: ABC CLIO Tucker, 2007), p. 71.

added to make them easier to raise their muzzles. *La Realle* had ten cannoniers plus the master so probably at least ten heavy guns. The other two had five. Several barrels of gunpowder were provided as well as balls. Five of the barrels that had been stored at Honfleur turned out to be damp and had to be treated before they were embarked. Guns were not the only defences. There were also pikes, halberds, lances and fire pots and ‘other muniments of war’. The French were making as certain as possible that Marie would be protected.

Necessary provision was made for repairs en route. Barrels of pitch and tallow, various lumps of iron, nails and other necessities including iron pincers, hammers for the cannoniers, cloth to make bags to hold the powder, buckets for emptying the galleasses and cords for tying down the barrels. Hosepipes coffer and locks, earthenware pots for candles, thirty-six lanterns, the box of a surgeon for each galleass and a balance and weights.

Other equipment was assembled. The navigation was assisted by three clocks to ‘faire les cartes de la galleace’—presumably to chart the route—as well as other guides. They had lead lines, but there is no mention of a compass. Perhaps that was a tool the pilots owned.

The food included 300 fresh loaves and over 4,000 loaves of biscuit bread—2,000 to the *Realle*, 1600 to the *St Jehan* and 1200 to *St Pierre*. A hundred new pipes (de fustaille) for fresh water, seven barrels of Burgundy wine (3 to *La Realle*, and 2 each to the other two) 70 pipes of Madeira split between *La Realle* and the *St Jehan* and twenty eight pipes of cider in the *St Pierre*. There were seven live sheep, fresh beef and salt beef, 2861 pounds of barley plus 1148 more in the *St Jehan*; 1050 pounds of oats, thirty barrels of peas, four of vinegar 190 pounds of candles and 1300 measures of firewood. All this food was to be prepared in a galley with a chaldron and grill and knives and forks for handling the meat. A variety of platters and baskets were provided including 114 *corbeilles* to serve the bread and biscuits to the mariners and *gens de guerre*. The food provided for the dowager duchess and her train from 20 May to 20 June following was listed separately.

Each ship had a captain, paid £60; a master £20; a contremaitre £10; two pilots £6 each, four casernier (gatekeepers or quartermasters) £6 each, two valets (purser equivalent) £7, two master carpenters, £6 one master butler and tonnelier £4, a master cannonier £7, other cannoniers, trumpets, drummers and two master barbers £6. Many of these payments were much delayed. De Bonnebault was not paid until 25 October 1543 although Jacques de

Fontaine received a gift from the king of 200 livres tournois on 30 September 1538.

Ships could not sail without mariners, however, and it appears that the local sailors were not willing volunteers. They were given 10–00 on signing up but many resisted. The master of *La Realle*, Jaques Malon, raised a hundred in Dieppe and the master valet pressed another 75 who were also given 10–00. Jehan Coer, master of the *St Jehan*, raised 160 in Havre de Grace and the master of the *St Pierre*, Martin Savalle, raised 120 mariners and *gens de guerre*. The captain of the *St Pierre* raised another twenty in Le Havre and various others were collected here and there in dribs and drabs. The total came to around 200 for *La Realle*, and about 160 in the smaller galleasses. The account names many of them.

These may have been all the crew. There is no unambiguous reference to convicts¹⁹ and no indication of expenses that relate to convicts so it may be that the oars, if used, were pulled by the free mariners although the French were using convicts on the galleys by 1517.²⁰ The occasional references to provisions for those ‘dessus’ such as five hundred earthenware pots for their wine, cider and water, 200 wooden spoons to serve their pottage and so on matches the number of free mariners recruited for service on the galleasses and perhaps suggests that some of them were expected to work on the benches and that these were below the gundeck. Whether they would have rowed in the medieval way (*alla sensile* or *en galoche*) that is three rowers to a bench each with their own oar, or in the later way with four to a single oar cannot be established. Wedderburn in the *Complaint of Scotland* (published in 1549) speaks of the many oars on the galleass but this may have been mere rhetoric. On the other hand the French can be shown to use triremes (separate oars) as late as the 1540s and 1550s.²¹

We cannot in fact be certain, for all the detail, what these galleass looked like as there does not seem to be a common design at this period.²² An early French treatise, which dates to the 1520s,

¹⁹ There is a mention of a small recompense for M Partin ‘des foarcets’.

²⁰ Bibliothèque Nationale Fond Français 5500 f. 216 no 243.

²¹ Bibliothèque Nationale Fond Français 15641 f. 90.

²² By the 17th century there is a common design and Joseph Furttenbach in *Architectura Navalis* (Ulm 1629) tells us that it was designed exclusively for sea

mentions rowing à la quatrième and suggests that the galleass has two masts but this may relate only to Mediterranean galleys.²³ The English galleass *The Bull* included in the Anthony roll in 1546 does not appear to have castles and has four masts. The English favoured flush decks²⁴ but the galleass in this French Atlantic fleet undoubtedly had castles. The galleass shown in the battle of Lepanto thirty years later has castles and three masts. The altered structure of a galleass required a different angle of oar and an altered *apostis* (the outboard support for the oar) but such sixteenth century images as we have rarely show the *apostis* even where oars are visible.

All we can be certain of is that Marie was carried to her new home in splendidly and carefully refurbished ships fully worthy of the position and dignity she now commanded.

battle with five large and five small guns set up at the proda and giogio de proda and on each side between the oars 12 small guns.

²³ Bibliothèque Nationale Fonds Français 3174.

²⁴ Tom Glasgow jnr, 'The Navy in the First Elizabethan Undeclared War 1559–1560', *Mariner's Mirror* 54 (1968), p. 25.

